

# What Skin Cancer Treatment Is Right For You?

Get to know your options



*Not actual patient*

 GentleCure™  
TOUGH ON CANCER • GENTLE ON SKIN



# Have You or a Loved One Been Diagnosed with Nonmelanoma Skin Cancer and Need Advanced Treatment



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If so, you are not alone. Millions of people are diagnosed with some type of nonmelanoma skin cancer each year. The most common types are basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma. The good news is that these types of skin cancers are often very treatable, and there are many ways to treat them.

*This guide will help you better understand the most common and effective treatment options, so you can work with your doctor to decide which one is best for you.*

# The most common treatments for advanced skin cancer are:



Mohs surgery

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Image-guided  
superficial radiotherapy  
(IG-SRT)

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Systemic therapies

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## What is Mohs surgery?

Mohs surgery is a medical procedure in which the tumor and surrounding tissue are carefully cut out, or removed, from the body. When the cancer is removed, scar tissue usually grows back in its place.

Mohs surgery is performed by a surgeon and is typically done in a doctor's office or surgical center.

# What You Should Know About Mohs Surgery

## What to expect with Mohs surgery

For this procedure, the surgeon will inject medicine in the skin around the cancer to numb the area before cutting. Then the surgeon will begin cutting the cancer out in small layers. Each layer of tissue will be examined under a microscope after it is removed. You will wait in the waiting room while the tissue is examined. If cancer cells are detected, you will be brought back into the treatment room and an additional layer of tissue will be removed. The process will continue until there are no visible signs of cancer cells.

When the procedure is complete, the surgeon will stitch the open wound and provide postsurgical wound care instructions. For some people, the surgery can take less than 4 hours. But for people with more complex skin cancer, the surgery can take all day.

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***With Mohs surgery, typically 1 tumor can be removed at a time. If you have more than 1 tumor, you may need to go back to your doctor for additional surgeries.***

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## Is Mohs surgery effective?

Mohs surgery has a 98% cure rate for basal cell carcinoma and a 96% cure rate for squamous cell carcinoma. The clinical and cosmetic outcomes depend on the skill level of the surgeon and the severity of the cancer.

## What to expect after Mohs surgery

When surgery is used to remove cancer, scar tissue fills the space where the cancer was cut out. The surgeon will try to preserve as much healthy skin as possible. But without knowing how deep and wide the cancer is prior to surgery, your surgeon will not know how deep and wide your wound and scarring will be until the surgery is complete. If needed, reconstructive surgery can help repair any damage or scarring to the skin.

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**1 in 3** people need reconstructive surgery after Mohs.

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If reconstruction is needed, it can often be done on the same day or the day after Mohs surgery. In some cases, reconstructive surgery and healing could take months or longer to complete. Recovery may limit daily activities for a certain period of time.

Stitches are usually removed 1 to 2 weeks after Mohs surgery and wound care will need to be performed daily. Postsurgical scars often improve over time.



Some scars may take 1 year or more to fully mature. People with more advanced cancer who require deeper cutting may experience permanent disfigurement.

## What are the possible side effects?

Complications with Mohs surgery may include mild to moderate pain that can be treated with over-the-counter medications. Other side effects may include infection, scarring, and temporary or permanent numbness in the surgical areas.

## Who Might Benefit From Mohs Surgery



**Mohs surgery is an option for people who:**

- Medically qualify for the surgery
- Understand the benefits and risks of surgery
- Do not have a fear of surgery
- Are not concerned about scarring or the potential need for reconstructive surgery
- Are able to manage a potentially long recovery time and limited daily activities

## Is Mohs surgery covered by my insurance?

Mohs surgery is covered by most commercial insurances and Medicare. But you may have to pay some out-of-pocket costs based on your specific coverage plan and deductibles.

- Out-of-pocket costs can range from a few dollars to several thousand dollars based on your insurance plan
- Any further services, such as reconstructive surgery, are not typically included in those costs and may be billed separately

If you are considering Mohs surgery, be sure to talk to your doctor's office about all the potential costs associated with the procedure and verify your benefits in advance of surgery.



## Pros

Mohs surgery has a **98%** cure rate for basal cell carcinoma and a **96%** cure rate for squamous cell carcinoma.

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## Cons

**1 in 3** people need reconstructive surgery after Mohs, which may limit activities and lead to long recovery times.



## What is IG-SRT?

IG-SRT, or image-guided superficial radiotherapy, is a nonsurgical treatment that uses low levels of X-ray energy to kill the cancer cells and allow normal tissue to grow back in its place.

IG-SRT can be performed in the doctor's office.

# What You Should Know About IG-SRT

## What to expect with IG-SRT

With IG-SRT, you will sit in a chair and a gel will be applied to the body at the site of the cancer. The doctor will hold a small imaging wand over the site and a detailed image of the cancer will appear on screen. The doctor will use that image to measure the size and shape of the tumor, calculate the dose of treatment, and define the treatment area. Once complete, the arm of the device will be placed over the treatment site, and the exact dose of X-ray energy will be used to precisely target the cancer site without harming the normal tissue around it.

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***IG-SRT is the only skin cancer treatment with ultrasound imaging, so you and your doctor can see the cancer, precisely target the tumor, and watch it shrink over the course of treatment.***

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IG-SRT is delivered in stages, which typically involve 3 to 5 treatments per week for 4 to 7 weeks. Each treatment is painless and can be done in as little as 15 minutes. Up to 3 tumors can be treated at one time, and the dose can be adjusted at every stage based on tumor response.

## Is IG-SRT effective?

IG-SRT has a cure rate of 99% for basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, making it one of the most effective treatments available for advanced skin cancer based on the clinical studies.

## What to expect after treatment

When X-ray energy is used to kill cancer cells, dead cancer cells are replaced by healthy tissue over time, so there is no scarring. There is a small risk of skin atrophy (thinning of the skin) and pigment changes (changes in the color of the skin) at the treatment site. But the chances of that are low.

## What are the possible side effects?

Side effects may include skin inflammation with redness and swelling at the treatment site. These side effects often go away 2 to 6 weeks after treatment is complete. Topical creams or ointments may be used throughout the course of treatment to help minimize the side effects. There is less than a 5% chance of developing a secondary cancer 20 to 40 years after treatment. There is also risk of alopecia (hair loss) in the area of the body that has been treated.

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*Unlike Mohs surgery, there is no cutting, bleeding, scarring, or need for reconstructive surgery. You will not need anesthesia. You can continue with your normal daily activities during the course of treatment.*

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## Who Might Benefit From IG-SRT



**IG-SRT is an option for people who:**

- Would prefer a nonsurgical treatment
- May not be candidates for surgery
- Want to see the cancer shrink so they know treatment is working
- Have multiple lesions that need to be treated
- Want to avoid the potential side effects of surgery (cutting, bleeding, scarring)
- Care about cosmetic results

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*While other radiotherapies exist, IG-SRT is the only one with ultrasound imaging that lets you and your doctor see the cancer inside the body while it is being treated.*

*Much like ultrasound imaging during pregnancy lets you see the baby inside the body and measure its growth over time, IG-SRT lets you see the cancer inside the body and watch it shrink over the course of treatment.*

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## Is IG-SRT covered by my insurance?

IG-SRT is covered by most commercial insurances and Medicare. With most insurance plans, you may have to pay some out-of-pocket cost based on your specific coverage plan and deductibles. The amount can range from very little out-of-pocket expense to a few thousand dollars. Your doctor's office can work with your insurance plan to find out the cost to you.





## Pros

IG-SRT is one of the most effective treatments for advanced skin cancer, with a 99% cure rate for basal and squamous cell carcinomas.

With IG-SRT, treatment is painless. There is no cutting, bleeding, scarring, or need for reconstructive surgery.

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## Cons

IG-SRT typically requires 3 to 5 short treatment sessions per week for 4 to 7 weeks.



## What are systemic therapies?

Systemic therapies are prescription medications that are given through the bloodstream to destroy cancer cells in the body.

Some systemic therapies can be taken at home. Others must be administered in a healthcare setting.

# What You Should Know About Systemic Therapies

## How do systemic therapies work?

Systemic therapies can be delivered through an intravenous (IV) tube that is placed into the vein through a needle, a gel or cream that is rubbed onto the skin, or a pill or capsule that is swallowed.

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## 3 main types of systemic therapy

- 1 Chemotherapy**  
Stops the cancer cells from growing, dividing, and making more cells
  - 2 Targeted therapy**  
Blocks the growth and spread of cancer cells while limiting damage to healthy cells
  - 3 Immunotherapy**  
Boosts the body's natural defenses to fight cancer
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## What to expect with systemic therapies

Depending on the type and severity of cancer, you may either be given one or a mix of systemic therapies. These therapies may need to be taken for several weeks, months, or years depending on the skin cancer. Should your doctor recommend systemic therapy, he or she will help you better understand what to expect with the chosen course of treatment.

## Are systemic therapies effective?

Systemic therapies have cure rates ranging from 61% to 84%. Effectiveness depends on the type of prescription medicine used, the stage of the cancer, and how well you adhere to the care plan.

## What are the possible side effects?

The side effects depend on the medication being used.

**Chemotherapy** creams can cause irritation, burning, redness, and stinging during treatment. These symptoms usually go away after treatment has stopped.

**Targeted therapies** may cause hair thinning, muscle cramps, weight loss, dry skin, and loss of taste.

**Immunotherapies** can have a range of side effects from fatigue, rash, and diarrhea to more severe and possibly life-threatening side effects, such as problems in the lungs, intestines, liver, hormone glands, skin, and kidneys.

Be sure to discuss the side effects of any medication with your doctor before taking it.

## Who Might Benefit From Systemic Therapies?

**Systemic therapies are an option for people who:**

- Have advanced skin cancer and are not candidates for surgery or IG-SRT
- Would prefer not to have surgery or IG-SRT
- Are treated with surgery or IG-SRT and would benefit from additional treatment methods

## Are systemic therapies covered by my insurance?

Cost of treatment and how much will be covered by insurance depends on the type of plan you have and the type of systemic therapy your doctor recommends. Be sure to discuss this with your doctor and office staff before beginning any skin cancer treatment.



## Pros

Systemic therapies are available in a wide range of options.

Systemic therapies are viable treatment options for people who cannot undergo surgery or IG-SRT, those who would prefer systemic treatments, and those who may benefit from adding prescription medication to their surgical or IG-SRT treatment plans.

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## Cons

Cure rates with systemic therapies range from 61% to 84%.

Systemic therapies tend to have more side effects than other types of treatment.

# What Option Is Right for Me

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Asking questions about all the available treatment options, and being open and honest with your doctor about your personal goals, is the best way to ensure you get the treatment that is right for you.



# Treatment decisions should be based on 2 things:

## Clinical factors

These are things your doctor will consider when making a treatment recommendation, such as:

- The type of cancer cells
- The size and location of the tumor
- The effectiveness and potential side effects of each treatment option
- Your health profile, including other health conditions you may have and medications you may be taking

## Personal goals

These are things that are important for you to consider, such as:

- What you want out of treatment
- How comfortable you are with the benefits and risks of each treatment option
- How well the treatment option fits into your daily lifestyle

## Questions that can help you define your personal treatment goals

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*Be sure to discuss your answers with your doctor so you can work together to determine what treatment may be right for you.*

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- 1 Would you prefer a surgical or nonsurgical treatment option?
- 2 Do you have multiple tumors that need to be treated?
- 3 Is your cancer located in a visible area of the body in which cosmetic results and scarring are a concern, such as around the ears, eyes, cheeks, forehead, lips, chin, scalp, or nose?
- 4 Would you be comfortable having surgery without knowing if you will need reconstructive surgery afterwards?
- 5 Would you find comfort in being able to see the tumor shrink while it is being treated?
- 6 Do you have the time and transportation needed for multiple short visits to the doctor's office over the course of a few weeks?
- 7 How important is it for you to remain active without restrictions to your daily activities during and after treatment?

# Tips for choosing the treatment that is best for you



Your personal goals are just as important as the clinical factors of your cancer. Be sure to tell your doctor what you want out of treatment and what treatment option you think is right for you.



Not all doctors offer all treatment options. Before choosing a treatment, be sure to talk to doctors who offer the different options so you have all the facts before making a final decision.



Remember, all radiotherapies are not the same. IG-SRT is the only one with image-guidance that allows advanced targeting of the cancer cells. If you are interested in IG-SRT, be sure to speak with a doctor that has this advanced technology.

**The Skin Cancer Information Specialists at GentleCure™ can help you learn more about your treatment options so you have all the information you need to make an informed decision.**

**Call 855-796-8629 to speak with a Skin Cancer Information Specialist or visit [GentleCure.com](https://www.gentlecure.com) today.**

